

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A water-soluble casting mold comprising a mixture having a refractory granular material for casting sand and a water-soluble binder containing an inorganic sulfate compound comprising magnesium sulfate and at least one other inorganic sulfate compound selected from aluminum sulfate, sodium sulfate, nickel sulfate, and manganese sulfate, wherein the magnesium sulfate is at least 50% by weight of the water-soluble binder and the at least one other inorganic sulfate compound is less than 50% by weight of the water-soluble binder, wherein the at least one other inorganic sulfate compound forms a mixed crystal in combination with the magnesium sulfate upon the mixture being dried, wherein the inorganic sulfate compound exists in a state of hydrate containing crystal water after the mixture is dried.

2. (CANCELLED)

3. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The water-soluble casting mold according to claim 1, wherein the magnesium sulfate has crystal water equivalent to mono- to penta-hydrate after the mixture is dried.

4. (ORIGINAL) The water-soluble casting mold according to claim 1, wherein the binder contains the inorganic sulfate compound and not more than 75% by weight of at least one of sodium dihydrogen phosphate and potassium dihydrogen phosphate.

5. (ORIGINAL) The water-soluble casting mold according to claim 1, wherein the binder contains the inorganic sulfate compound and not more than 50% by weight of at least one of tricalcium phosphate, aluminum phosphate, trisodium phosphate, sodium diphosphate, and disodium hydrogen phosphate dodecahydrate.

6. (ORIGINAL) The water-soluble casting mold according to claim 1, wherein the binder is a mixture of the inorganic sulfate compound and not more than 75% by weight of magnesium chloride.

7. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method for manufacturing a water-soluble casting mold including:

a first step of obtaining casting sand by mixing a refractory granular material for casting sand with a water-soluble binder containing an inorganic sulfate compound comprising magnesium sulfate and at least one other inorganic sulfate compound selected from aluminum sulfate, sodium sulfate, nickel sulfate, and manganese sulfate and water in which the magnesium sulfate is at least 50% by weight of the water-soluble binder and the at least one other inorganic sulfate compound is less than 50% by weight of the water-soluble binder;

a second step of forming the resulting casting sand; and

a third step of obtaining a mold by drying the casting sand in such a manner that the inorganic sulfate compound in the casting sand is kept retaining at least a portion of the crystal water.

8. (CANCELLED)

9. (ORIGINAL) The method for manufacturing a water-soluble casting mold according to claim 7, wherein the binder contains the inorganic sulfate compound and not more than 75% by weight of at least one of sodium dihydrogen phosphate and potassium dihydrogen phosphate.

10. (ORIGINAL) The method for manufacturing a water-soluble casting mold according to claim 7, the binder contains the inorganic sulfate compound and not more than 50% by weight of at least one of tricalcium phosphate, aluminum phosphate, trisodium phosphate, sodium diphosphate, and disodium hydrogen phosphate dodecahydrate.

11. (ORIGINAL) The method for manufacturing a water-soluble casting mold according to claim 7, wherein the binder is a mixture of the inorganic sulfate compound and not more than 75% by weight of magnesium chloride.

12. (ORIGINAL) The method for manufacturing a water-soluble casting mold according to claim 7, wherein the third step is carried out by drying the casting sand with microwave or hot air heating.

13. (ORIGINAL) The method for manufacturing a water-soluble casting mold according to claim 7, wherein forming in the second step is carried out by filling a cavity of a ventilative ceramic mold with the casting sand.

14-15. (CANCELLED)